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This year the American people once again face the prospect of candidates for public office who pledge peace while plans for maintaining the Indochina War are secretly maintained. So many times have we heard peace rhetoric at election time, that it is now necessary for candidates to pledge an exact plan and an exact timetable for a complete withdrawal of US presence in Indochina. If they cannot do this much, these candidates should be absolutely denied support in their campaigns, whatever their other views, because the Indochina War is by far the most violent and bloody crisis in which America is presently involved and its termination is our most pressing priority.

We can learn a lesson from the way French politicians withdrew from Indochina in 1954. Pierre Mendes-France pledged ~~upon becoming Prime Minister~~ ~~formally on June 17,~~ that he would resign from office if he did not negotiate a settlement at Geneva by July 20. The settlement came on July 21, only one day late.

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We should demand the same exactitude and commitment from American politicians with regard to Indochina. We propose, therefore, an Indochina Peace Platform which will be presented to all candidates for office throughout America this election year. All candidates should ^{*quickly accepted*} support this program immediately, and pledge ~~x~~ also to implement this program within 24 hours of taking office if they are elected.

1. The US government should unconditionally and immediately end all air, ground and naval operations against Indochina;

2. Simultaneously, the US government should announce a date, no more than three months in the future, ^{*in which to complete*} for the withdrawal of all ground troops, naval, air force, CIA and "advisory" personnel, and military equipment from Indochina, and should cease financing and advising mercenary troops in Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam. The details of ~~this withdrawal~~ withdrawal, and the release of American prisoners, should be arranged ~~in Paris~~ ~~in Paris~~.

3. The US government should withdraw support from the dictatorial Thieu regime, and ^{*TERMINATE*} all unilateral American aid to Saigon ~~should be terminated~~ within three months of withdrawal of US forces. *A*

arrange in Paris for release of Am POW
4. The US government should declare a general amnesty for all draft resisters, armed forces deserters, and others in exile or prison for their opposition to the Indochina war.

The supporters of this Platform commit themselves not only to deny their campaign support and votes but to work ~~as actively~~ ^{*to*} to expose and defeat any candidate who refuses to commit himself to carrying out such a ~~campaign program~~ ^{*program*}.

have abstracted in this paper from experience of the last two decades gives a clear hint of a definite breaking-point, or a foreseeable change in basic motives and values either for the Communist-led forces or the U.S. government. On its face, that is simply a limitation of the analysis, a characteristic — perhaps a defect — of the model suggested.

Or perhaps it is a property of reality.

If so, it is a human and political reality, and humans can, in principle, change it. But change would not be easy. Rule 1 has deep roots in politicians' fears and motives, and in public responses, that have been powerfully influential for twenty years, through some hard times and challenges. There is little indication yet that it will not speak commandingly to Presidents after this one. (Of its authority for the present one, there can be no real doubt.)⁵³

Improved Presidential foresight — even the awareness that might be attained from this analysis — would not probably supersede Rule 1. If anything, it might serve to relax the constraining influence of Rule 2.

In the spring of 1965 President Johnson is reported to have received calls almost daily from one of his closest advisors telling him (what no one had to tell him): "Lyndon, don't be the first American President to lose a war."

It is true that such advisers omitted warnings of other deadly errors. They neglected to caution him: "Don't, over more than one or two years, lie to the public; or mislead and bypass Congress; or draft and spend and kill and suffer casualties at the rate your military will propose; or abort negotiations; or, even once,

⁵³ The discussion has gone only through 1968; no attempt is made here to apply the conjectures and generalizations of this paper to the statements and actions of the current administration. That is left as an exercise to the reader.

Nothing in the past attitudes and history of the current President, or any of his public statements or official actions so far in office, suggests in any way that these generalizations should be less applicable to him than to any of his predecessors; thus this extrapolation should be a fair test. One might, for example, address the question: Which year between now and 1977 might Richard Milhous Nixon consider an acceptable one, for him, to lose South Vietnam to Communist control?

For my own views, see my article, "Murder in Laos: The Reason Why," *New York Review of Books* (March 11, 1971), 13-17: "Like Kennedy and Johnson before him, Richard Nixon believes he cannot hold the White House for a second term unless he holds Saigon through his first."

Continuing with his Lansdale items, Porter said, "Ed has obtained a copy of a speech that Thang has written for Ky to deliver shortly. It mentions some provinces that have done very well in Revolutionary Development. It seems that it might be a good idea to have Ed suggest to Thang that the province chiefs who had done outstandingly well should get spot promotions. What is your opinion on that?" Lodge asked Westmoreland what he thought; Westy looked very dubious and said, "I would want to examine that very closely -- for one thing, I would want to discover whether the improvement was due to the province chief's own efforts or not." (This question is scarcely raised when a Vietnamese regimental commander gets the Gallantry Cross because U.S. air has killed 100 VC in the general vicinity of his units.) "Besides, recognition like that coming from Americans could be the kiss of death. I don't know a single exception to the rule that when an American has praised a Vietnamese official, that man has been canned within a few months."

Porter protested that this recognition was to come from Ky, not the Americans, but Lodge carried on, "In my first term here, I praised a province chief and ruined his career; I've never gotten over it." Westy recommended that instead of promotion we might recommend that such province chiefs be given a medal. "We didn't want to get in a position of appearing to meddle in their personnel matters." Lodge, agreeing, picked up a JUSPAO report and quoted it to the effect that many Vietnamese officers were getting sensitive about too many Americans giving advice in the provinces and actually stepping beyond the role of advisors. "There isn't any doubt," Lodge commented, "but the way we must get things done around here is to get them to think that they thought of it. That's always the way when there is more than one nation involved." Porter added, "The people at our level know that we bend over backwards to protect their sensitivities; the problem arises at the lower levels."

/I was grinding my teeth during this exchange, after my initial thrill at hearing the suggestion that we might actually encourage the GVN to promote on the basis of merit and performance. It was particularly frustrating to have this shot down on grounds of a principle that we should not influence their personnel policies, since I am now convinced that if we do not influence their promotion system in this direction our joint efforts are doomed. As for worries about an American kiss of death, encouragement could be given in purely impersonal terms: "I understand you have made an evaluation of the performance of your personnel. Why not, inst-

in favor of your doing it.7

Westy suggested that elections be used to promote the flow of ralliers; perhaps Qui Chanh could carry the word to the villagers that elections were an indication of the freedom of life on the GVN side, as an inducement to defection. Casler said he had asked MICH whether Qui Chanh can vote or not. (At this point Porter translated Qui Chanh, at Lodge's request, and was complimented for speaking Vietnamese.) No one knew whether they were currently allowed, and when Lodge asked for opinions, Mann, Porter and Westy all commented they thought it would be a good idea if they could vote. Porter commented that no communists would be listed as candidates so there was little to be lost, and there were not enough Qui Chanh to effect the outcome anyway. Porter suggested that you pursue this with Thang. I think there is a lot of mileage in this idea. Lodge agreed that offhand it seemed like a good idea.

Westy reported that Brig. Gen. Tobias, who had served in Korea, would head a Philippine Task Force. Chief of Staff Amatos and Tobias were very happy about the location of Tay Ninh. Marcos was worried about the Filipinos being zapped, which would be a political setback. He had written Marcos that a U.S. brigade was being put in the area, a month earlier. Amatos wants the group to have combat equipment: M11's, 105s, 4.2's, tanks. Westy said he was delighted and had ordered them to be given everything they wanted plus ML6s; we had no tanks to give them, but Westy had gotten Vien to give them four M41 tanks from ARVN.

Casler reported that "the election situation was going well in the provinces, but was stalled at headquarters; civil servants were more demoralized than before, not knowing whether Tri would keep them on or bring in his own people, so they are doing nothing." (He started by saying that JUSPAO was "still having trouble making any contact with Tri: no one from JUSPAO had managed to make contact." He had an appointment with a low bureaucrat who had an office near Tri's, and hoped to make some inroads that way, convincing Tri that JUSPAO had some capabilities for helping him.)

Casler said that a documentary film and a cartoon booklet had been completed on how to vote. Porter broke in, "Could they be induced to let the Ministry of Interior see it?" Casler: "I don't want to say yes on that for sure." Porter: "At least Thang should know of the existence of the film". (Another job for the whole...